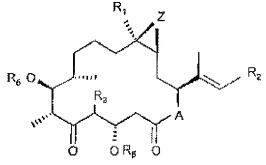
Amendments to the Claims:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 -10 Cancelled.

Claim 11 (previously presented): A process for the preparation of an epothilone of formula I,



(I)

wherein

A represents O or NR_7[[,]];

R_1 is hydrogen or lower alkyl which is unsubstituted or substituted by hydroxy, lower acyloxy, lower alkoxy, halogen, amino, lower alkyl amino, di-lower alkyl amino or lower acyl amino[[,]];

R_2 is unsubstituted or substituted heteroaryl having at least one nitrogen atom[[,]];

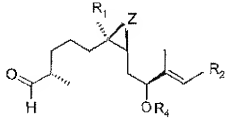
R_3 represents hydrogen or lower alkyl[[,]];

R_5 and R_6 are hydrogen[[,]]; and

R_7 is hydrogen or lower alkyl[[,]]; and

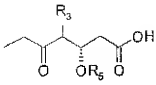
Z is O or a bond[[,]]; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof; comprising the steps of:

(a) reacting an aldehyde of formula II



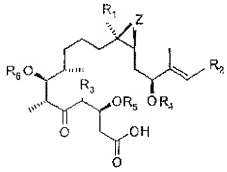
(II)

wherein R_1, R_2 and Z have the meanings as provided above for a compound of formula I and R_4 is a protecting group, with an ethylketone of formula III,



(III)

wherein R_5 is H or a protecting group different or identical to R_4 and R3 has the meaning as provided above for a compound of formula I, to provide the aldol of formula IV,



(IV)

wherein R_1, R_2, R_3 and Z have the meanings as provided above for a compound of formula I, R_4 a protecting group, R_5 is H or a protecting group different or identical to R_4 and R_6 is hydrogen[[,]]

(b) reacting the aldol of formula IV with a reagent capable to introduce a protecting group which is different or identical to R_4 furnishing a carboxylic acid of formula IV,

wherein R_1, R_2, R_3 and Z have the meanings as provided above for a compound of formula I, R_4 a protecting group and R_5 is H or R_5 and R_6 are protecting groups different or identical to R_4[[,]];

(c) reacting the carboxylic acid of formula IV with a reagent capable to remove the protecting group R_4 under conditions which do not result in the removal of the protecting groups R_5 and R_6 providing a carboxylic acid of formula IV,

wherein R_1, R_2, R_3 and Z have the meanings as provided above for a compound of formula I, R_4 is hydrogen and R_5 is H or R_5 is H or R_5 and R_6 are protecting groups,

(d) macrolactonizing the carboxylic acid of formula IV providing the epothilone of formula I,

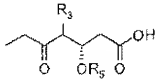
wherein R_1, R_2, R_3 and Z have the meanings as provided above for a compound of formula I, A is O and R_5 is H or R_5 and R_6 are protecting groups[[,]];

(e) reacting the epothilone of formula I with a reagent capable of removing the protecting groups R_5 and R_6 furnishing an epothilone of formula I,

wherein R_1, R_2, R_3, R_5, R_6 and Z have the meanings as provided above for a compound of formula I and A is O[,]; and

(f) optionally reacting the epothilone of formula I into an epothilone of formula I wherein R_1, R_2, R_3, R_5, R_6 and Z have the meanings as provided above for a compound of formula I and A is NR_7, wherein R_7 is hydrogen or lower alkyl.

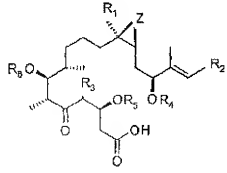
Claim 12 (original): An ethylketone of formula III,



(III)

wherein R_3 has the meaning as provided above for a compound of formula I and R_5 is hydrogen or a protecting group.

Claim 13 (previously presented): An aldol of formula IV,



(IV)

R_1 is hydrogen or lower alkyl which is unsubstituted or substituted by hydroxy, lower acyloxy, lower alkoxy, halogen, amino, lower alkyl amino, di-lower alkyl amino, lower acyl amino,

R_2 is unsubstituted or substituted heteroaryl[,];

R_3 represents hydrogen or lower alkyl[,];

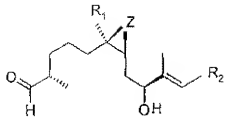
R_4 is hydrogen or a protecting group[,];

R_5 is a protecting group different or identical to R_4[,];

R_6 is hydrogen or a protecting group different or identical to R_4[,]; and

Z is O or a bond.

Claim 14 (previously presented): A process for the preparation of an aldehyde of formula II



(II)

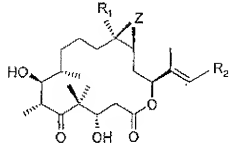
wherein

R_1 is hydrogen or lower alkyl which is unsubstituted or substituted by hydroxy, lower acyloxy, lower alkoxy, halogen, amino, lower alkyl amino, di-lower alkyl amino, lower acyl amino[,];

R_2 is unsubstituted or substituted heteroaryl[,];

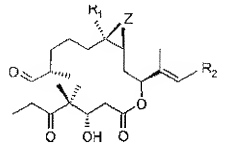
Z is O or a bond[,]; comprising the steps of:

(a) reacting an epothilone of formula V



(V)

wherein the radicals R_1, R_2 and Z have the meanings as provided for a compound of formula II above, with a reagent effecting a retro-aldol reaction furnishing an ester of formula VI



(VI)

wherein the radicals R_1, R_2 and Z have the meanings as provided for a compound of formula II above, which ester is hydrolized in a second step into its components, 4,4-dimethyl-3-hydroxy-5 oxo-heptanoic acid and the aldehyde of formula II as defined above.

Claims 15-22 Cancelled.